

Race for funds begins

Lots of work ahead

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NOW the jubilant celebrations have died down, the hard work begins.

The Gold Coast has less than seven years to prepare for the biggest event in the city's history.

Over the next few years the region's lagging construction industry is set to re-ignite as existing venues are upgraded, new facilities are built and an entire athletes village is constructed at Parklands.

The state will spend more than \$2 billion to prepare the Coast for the Commonwealth Games, with more than \$500 million invested in sport and transport infrastructure, creating an estimated 30,000 jobs.

Premier Anna Bligh said the building of new sporting venues on the Gold Coast and the upgrading of existing ones might not start for three years but the first stage of Parklands should be the first project to move ahead.

"The State Government will be making a very significant investment in the Gold Coast thanks to the Commonwealth Games win," she said. "But that investment will be made over a seven-year period."

Ms Bligh said she was considering introducing legislation to give the organising committee powers extending beyond the Commonwealth Games.

"I think it is important that we do whatever we can to cut red tape so that things can move ahead," she said. "One way of doing that is by establishing a Gold Coast Commonwealth Games Act, which would give

the committee power to plan for the Games as a whole."

Ms Bligh said that would allow the committee to have a wider vision for projects like Parklands beyond just ensuring it could operate as an athletes village.

The weekend bid, won by 43 to 27 votes, heralds the end of an era for Parklands as a show-ground. Work on the \$1 billion Parklands health and knowledge precinct is expected to start as early as 2013. The residential complex would house athletes during the Games, but the Government is hoping a private developer will build the village or take it over after construction.

Former mayor and president of the Gold Coast Show Society Gary Baildon said he did not believe the right decisions had been made for the village's location and he had not given up hope for the future of the show.

"We're still in discussions with the Government," he said. "As those investigations continue, we'll see what the outcome is going to be."

Mayoral candidate David Power said the city must leverage other investment off the Commonwealth Games, including new tourism infrastructure like the cruise ship terminal, surf culture museum, restoration of the Kirra break and creation of an artificial reef.

"As part of this investment in infrastructure, we must demand that a high portion of the contracts to be let by the state go to local businesses," he said. "This does not mean Brisbane or interstate companies who set up two people in an office to bid but local companies with the exper-

tourism

GOLD Coast Tourism chief executive officer Martin Winter said he had been keen to harness the Coast's natural potential and become the Australia's home of participatory sporting events to complement its sun, sand and surf attractions.

"This infrastructure will give us the opportunity to bid for national and international sporting events like the FINA World Championships in swimming and diving."

Coast hotel consultant Mike Jones said the announcement created positive focus for a struggling industry, while Gold Coast Airport chief operating officer Paul Donovan said the lead-up to the event "will put the Coast on the map in terms of not only tourists but teams preparing for the Games and other sporting events".



tise and will to deliver. We also need the state to introduce special legislation to protect the Games and the work required."

Funding for the Evandale Cultural Centre and the second stage of the light rail project was also being considered.

"We will look at funding," Ms Bligh said. "But it's also the sort of project we would be talking to the Federal Government about."

Supporting the light rail link from Parklands to Helensvale train station, so that it links to heavy rail, was also something Ms Bligh said she would discuss.

The State Government expects the Commonwealth Games to only cost taxpayers \$500 million by the time an estimated \$210 million is made from ticket sales and television rights.

However it is not including

Parklands, the Evandale Cultural Centre or any road or rail funding in that figure.

Creek to Creek Chamber of Commerce president Darren Mackintosh said his organisation would lobby the State Government to fast-track projects for the southern end of the Coast.

The Chamber estimated up to 40 per cent of athletes and tourists arriving for the Games

would fly into Coolangatta, which would mean increased traffic in southern suburbs.

"We're hoping this might be a catalyst for the State Government's widening of the M1 and the extension of the rail line to Coolangatta," he said.

Federal Treasurer Wayne Swan said the Gold Coast had been spluttering along while the rest of Queensland had been rid-

ing high on the resources boom and the Games would inject more confidence and surety in southeast Queensland.

He said the Federal Government had provided financial guarantees to the Queensland Government and the Commonwealth Games bid committee, but he would not disclose how much money it would tip in.

"It's going to bring jobs, it's

going to bring investment and, most importantly, it's going to showcase Australia to the world," Mr Swan said.

"It (also will make) our economy stronger and more resilient over time.

"I don't want to go into great detail today but it will add a cost to the budget."

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events.....

GET used to major international events on the Gold Coast because thanks to the Commonwealth Games more are on the way.

Following the successful Gold Coast 600 and World Record Bikini Parade, Events Queensland chief executive John O'Sullivan said winning the Commonwealth Games had capped a great year for the Coast.

"The flow-on benefits to the Gold Coast will be huge," he said.

"But it will not just boost the economy pride and self belief in the Gold Coast will also benefit."

Mr Sullivan said it was likely the city would bid for a range of extra sporting events now that it had been awarded the Commonwealth Games.

Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre general manager Adrienne Readings said the centre would hold Games competitions, showcasing the centre's versatility.

"With all the infrastructure the Premier said will come from being awarded the Games it will really showcase how ideally located the centre is," Ms Readings said.

"But not only that it puts us on the global stage and be a real world destination."

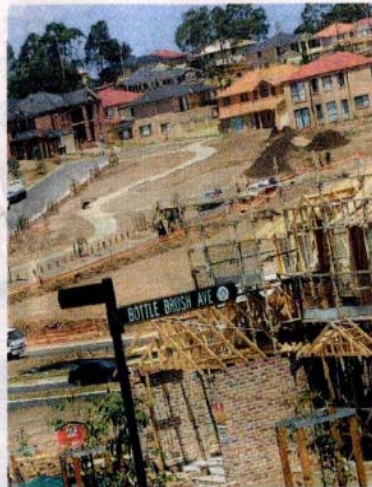
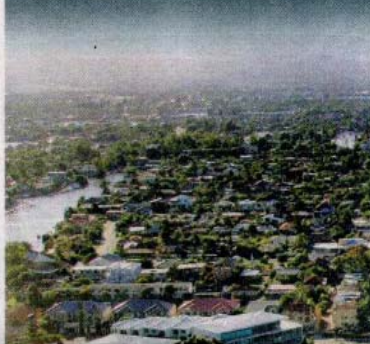
business.....

IT was the boost of confidence the business sector needed.

"With an event of this type coming to the city, it is certainly going to lift business confidence and those wishing to invest here. That in turn will create employment opportunities," said Jason Deacon, acting president for the Gold Coast Combined Chamber of Commerce.

"With the worldwide exposure this will receive it gives our city a great opportunity to showcase just what we have to offer."

Darren Mackintosh, combined chairman and Creek to Creek Chamber of Commerce president, said the business community



property.....

THE property rewards from the Games announcement have already begun rolling in.

Ray White Surfers Paradise boss Andrew Bell, who was also chairman of the Gold Coast's Business and Community Consultative Committee for the bid, said the win had given the Coast's market a much-needed injection of confidence.

"The fundamentals are very solid but the missing piece has been confidence."

He said while there was no immediate danger of a property shortage, in the long term more properties on the Coast would be needed.

Lucy Cole Prestige Properties agent Lucy Cole said on the back of the November 1 interest rate cut, confidence in the Coast's property market was soaring.

REIQ Gold Coast zone chairman John Newlands said the high-end infrastructure to be built throughout the Coast would leave a legacy that would benefit the region well after the closing ceremony.

"It's something the real estate industry was really hoping for; all this infrastructure just couldn't be better for the Coast."

development

THE construction industry says there's no time to waste if the Coast hopes to avoid the fiasco of the last Commonwealth Games in New Delhi.

The centrepiece of the Games will be the \$620 million athletes village to be built next to Griffith University where the 6500 athletes are due to be housed across 945 apartments, 42 townhouses, 301 studios and 50 units.

Housing Institute of Australia Gold Coast executive director Colin Buttenshaw said building must get under way as soon as possible.

He also said it would be difficult to find enough local skilled tradesmen even though the Games would deliver 30,000 jobs.

"The Gold Coast has been stripped of many of its contractors because of the downturn. We've lost more than two-thirds of our apprentices and most of them have gone to the mining and gas industry."

